DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 066 424 SP 005 780

AUTHOR Roaden, Arliss L.
TITLE Researching Research Training.
PUB DATE Apr 72
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Assn., Chicago, April 1972

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Research; Program Development; *Research and Development Centers; *Research Criteria; *Researchers; Research Methodology; *Research Problems

ABSTRACT

This discussion was presented at a symposium organized to study the usage of systematic research, development, diffusion, and evaluation (RDD&E) strategies being used in the establishment of RDD&E training programs. Three levels of exploring these programs are suggested: looking at specific RDD&E projects, allowing the Research Training Branch of the U.S. Office of Education to use RDD&E strategies to run national programs, and questioning the need for knowledge at the policy level. Recommendations indicate a need for a conceptual base for policy development in the entire RDD&E enterprise. (Author/MJM)

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

ED 066424

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

RESEARCHING RESEARCH TRAINING*

Arliss L. Roaden
The Ohio State University

The fact that a symposium is conducted for an open, professional examination of techniques employed in the conduct and administration of Research, Development, Diffusion, and Evaluation Training programs is a good omen. I congratulate Susan Klein for her wisdom and her courage in organizing this session. Thoughtful introspection can be painful, but it is of first priority for moving toward objectives of public accountability and healthier programs of research, development, diffusion and evaluation.

Susan stated that the major issue to be discussed in this symposium is the degree to which we are succeeding in turning our R and D tools upon ourselves. I became guilt ridden about that charge and wondered to what extent I should use R and D tools in discussing a symposium on using R and D

---

*Discussion of presentations at the Symposium, "Do We Practice What We Preach? Are systematic RDD and E Strategies being used in Establishing RDD and E Training Programs.

tools to look at R and D. If you are still with me, I overcame the guilt by taking refuge in the quote from Emerson, I believe: "man thinking must not be subdued by his instruments."

My participation in this symposium is somewhat unique in that I'm not directly related to a sponsored training program or the Research Training Branch of the U.S. Office of Education. I do, however, have more than a professional interest in the symposium. One of the participants had the misfortune of enrolling in a class I taught. Another participant began his advanced graduate program as my research assistant and ended it as my advisee. He is one of those advisees who passed by his mentor. In fact, some have suggested, and he is among them, that he had passed by his mentor before he ever started his graduate program.

In the presentations, some information has been given about six research training programs. No claim has been made that these are exemplary or representative; only that their funding has been fairly recent. Thus, one can hardly generalize beyond the cases. I do concede, however,

that the case analyses are useful.

There seem to me to be at least three levels of exploring "do we practice what we preach."

The first level is looking at the specific RDD and E projects. Each discrete function in the full range of RDD and E functions does not lend itself to the full range of RDD and E tools. Perhaps the only tools that are common (or should be common) to all of the research-related functions are research tools. At any rate, I question the wisdom of the RTB allocating money or an investigator accepting money for training programs that don't have as a primary objective the generation of new knowledge about what is done. The new knowledge must go beyond cummulative experiences, and include scientific inquiry into what is being done. Otherwise, the Research Training Branch might be renamed the Practice Training Branch. I concur with enthusiasm to Susan's suggestion that the RTB might provide supportive services to R and D projects.

The second level is at the level of the sponsoring agent (e.g. Susan's suggestion that the RTB can use RDD and E strategies to run its national programs). One of the great tragedies of all educational institutions is that we don't, in a systematic way, learn from the people and programs for which we have administrative or sponsorship responsibilities.

The third level, which seems to be more fundamental is the level at which public policies are generated for Educational RDD and E. This is the level that is primarily conceptual. How many projects shall be funded? Shall there be few large ones or a lot of small ones? What areas deserve attention? And where do we need more trained people and expertise? I have high regard for manpower studies and those who do forecasting. At the same time, I think we put too much faith in them for determining national priorities. Perhaps I'm reacting to the "Ph.D. glut bandwagon," but I would remind us all that educational manpower forecasting has a bad track record that dates back to a call for cutting back on Ph.I.'s in the year 1900; and the urgent recommendation in 1930 that medical schools reduce enrollment to

prevent an oversupply of M.D.'s. At the policy level, what makes more sense is to raise questions about the need for knowledge. In what fields do we know too much? In what fields do we know too little? A knowledge inventory and forecast for the future is more treacherous than counting people and positions, but I think it's necessary to undergird the manpower studies. In some research to which Blaine Worthen has given leadership, it was found that persons associated with the educational research community who held genuine research assistantships during their academic training were subsequently two and one-half times more productive of research than their peers who did not have RA experiences. Thus, it seems logical to tie the need for people to the need to know rather than the reverse.

In summary, worthy RDD and E projects and RDD and E administrative units require a conceptual base. To really "practice what we preach," we need a conceptual base for policy development in the entire RDD and E enterprise. Such an effort might be akin to the ambitious Carnegie studies

higher education, or the more modest conceptual work of Frank Neuman and his colleagues.

Perhaps, what I have done is take issue with the reasonableness of Paul Hood's premises (though I don't question their accuracy) "that training requirements are derived from personnel requirements, and personnel requirements are derived from federal program funding."

One final comment re the RFP materials that John Hopkins distributed. I must fill my role as an "institution man" by registering a plea on behalf of contracting institutions. I'm sure you would be disappointed if I went away without behaving at least once like a University Academic Official.

I concede that, in our private moments, all of us hope that each decision will be the one that transforms the world. However, I must register the plea for a bit more humility. "Sponsoring agencies and contracting agencies that are humble together will prosper together." I

refer to specific objective 6c "Mass resources, rather than spread them, to secure synergistic benefits such as ... development of a power base of sufficient strength to effect changes in established institutional requirements and procedures."

As an institution that is conducting one of the consortia (one that we take great pride in), I must cite some experiences. During the planning and early life of the consortium, I had a visit from the department chairman asking me about the rules of the Graduate School that would have to be changed in order tc carry out the program. I reviewed the relevant policies, (pertaining to off-campus Ph.D. research and non-campus based Graduate Faculty) and concluded that there was sufficient flexibility for conducting the program. Subsequently, I had a visit from two faculty members who raised the same questions, and I reached the same conclusions of sufficient flexibility within the policies. Finally, a beautiful female member of the planning staff was sent over to raise the same questions. It was almost a plea that I repent of my flexible ways and confess to at least one rigid rule

that this power base could change.

When you prescribe for conscientious researchers a set of objectives, one of which is to attack the institution, it's terribly frustrating for them not to be able to deliver.

In summary, for us to be intelligent about our intellectual programs, we must be operating from a comprehensive view of knowledge needs and proceed as sponsoring and contracting agencies where neither arrogance is manifested by the former nor snobbery by the latter.